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7 October 1953

TO: Chairman, CIA Career Service Board  
FROM: Chairman, CIA Honor Awards Board  
SUBJECT: Staff Study "CIA Honor Awards"

1. Problem: To create a series of internally controlled CIA honor awards to supplement the National Security Medal and Medal of Freedom for presentation to employees of the Agency whose performance warrants special recognition.

2. Assumptions:

a. In furtherance of the U.S. intelligence effort some individuals perform acts of valor or exemplary achievement which cannot be appropriately recognized under present CIA procedures.

b. The opportunity for contributing outstanding performance is present at all levels and in all areas.

3. Facts:

a. Military and civilian agencies recognize, by personal decoration, acts of valor and exemplary achievement.

b. The effectiveness of such decorations or awards depends to a large degree upon the standards under which they are awarded, as well as upon the recognition and appreciation accorded them.

c. The Agency, in contrast to others, has inadequate provision for internally controlled honor awards for presentation to deserving employees.

4. Discussion:

a. It is envisaged that the National Security Medal will remain the senior U.S. decoration for outstanding contribution in the field of U.S. intelligence. Two new CIA decorations would take precedence immediately after the National Security Medal so that, including the

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Medal of Freedom, a range of four decorations would be awarded to CIA personnel. The military equivalents of these decorations are roughly as follows:

(1)	National Security Medal -	(Distinguished Service Cross (Navy Cross (Distinguished Service Medal
(2)	CIA Medal for Exceptional Service -	(Silver Star (Legion of Merit (Distinguished Flying Cross (Soldiers Medal (Navy and Marine Corps Medal
(3)	CIA Medal for Meritorious Service -	(Bronze Star Medal (Air Medal (Commendation Ribbon
(4)	Medal of Freedom (when awarded to U.S. Nationals) - same as (3) above.	

b. The two CIA medals, each with appropriate appurtenances would be awarded when the following criteria are met:

(1) CIA Medal for Exceptional Service

(a) The recipient must have distinguished himself by a voluntary act of heroism, or by a series of closely related acts, involving the acceptance of existing dangers with praiseworthy fortitude and exemplary courage. In general, the degree of heroism will equal the standards employed by the Services when awarding the Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, Soldiers Medal or Navy and Marine Corps Medal; or,

(b) The recipient must have distinguished himself by performance of outstanding services, or achievement, of a distinctively exceptional nature in a duty of responsibility, the results of which constitute a major contribution to the missions of the Central Intelligence Agency.

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(2) The CIA Medal for Meritorious Service

(a) The recipient must have distinguished himself by the acceptance of existing dangers with praiseworthy fortitude and exemplary courage. In general, the criteria employed by the Services when awarding the Bronze Star Medal and Commendation Ribbon for heroic action will be followed; or

(b) The recipient must have distinguished himself by performance of meritorious services, or achievement, in addition to the duties normally expected of him, requiring initiative and extra effort which have contributed to the accomplishment of the missions of the Central Intelligence Agency.

5. Conclusions:

- a. The present Honor Awards Program would be enriched by the establishment of the decorations referred to in paragraph 4 above.
- b. Such awards should be made under circumstances appropriate to the stature of the award and to be made a matter of suitable notice.

6. Recommendations:

- a. That, utilizing the authority of Public Law 600, the decorations proposed in paragraph 4 above be authorized by the Director of Central Intelligence.
- b. That the Honor Awards Board be responsible for the establishment of standards and the review of recommendations for each of the decorations.

/s/

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Chairman,  
CIA Honor Awards Board

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